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Newsletter

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U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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OFFICE FOR FOOD AND FEED CONSERVATION
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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NEW CONSUMER FOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAM

The communities of Lancaster and York in Pennsylvania have completed the first week of the Department of Agriculture's "trial run" of its new consumer conservation program featuring the booklet, "Money-Saving Main Dishes," and the "Banner Buy" emblem to encourage the purchase of plentiful foods. Initial reaction to the program has been largely favorable. In later issues of the Newsletter, we intend to give you a more detailed account of the results of the Pennsylvania tests.

In the meanwhile, we submit a report on the progress of these tests prepared by the food distributors' committees in York and Lancaster. It reads in full:

"As we complete the first week's test of the new consumers' food conservation program, it gives us great satisfaction to report the apparent success of this test. This is most gratifying to the men in the food supply business. It was their idea that the Department of Agriculture should try out the plan of its Office for Food and Feed Conservation in the York and Lancaster areas, because our people are frugal and economic in their food consumption. If the plan is acceptable here, it will be useful elsewhere.

"The consumers' food conservation program does provide a positive way in which all families can be helped in their cost-of-living problems. The plan enables the food merchant to assist the homemaker by providing plentiful foods at lower prices, and it also helps farmers by providing a more stable market for their produce. Our farmers in York and Lancaster can be assisted directly by finding a bigger market for their products, especially those in plentiful supply.

"In our judgment, the proposal being offered here to encourage food conservation on the part of consumers will be of considerable benefit to the nation."

Many retail food stores in the two communities carried notices about the booklet, "Money-Saving Main Dishes," in their newspaper advertisements. They also listed the "Banner Buys" of plentiful foods. And the cooperation of press and radio was of the highest order.

Both Mayor Felix S. Bentzel of York and Mayor D. E. Cary of Lancaster proclaimed the week of May 9 as "Food Conservation Week." In his proclamation, Mayor Bentzel called for focusing of public attention on "the problem of serving nutritive meals in a period of high prices through encouraging economical selections and careful preparation of foods in abundant supply..." He urged every

York housewife to secure a copy of "Money-Saving Main Dishes," to utilize the recipes and purchase foods under the Department's emblem, "Banner Buy - A Plentiful Food."

("Money-Saving Main Dishes" can be obtained by sending a penny postal card to Food Conservation, Washington 25, D. C. The card should carry the name and address of the person who wants the booklet.)

Other communities and organizations are watching with interest the Lancaster and York tests. For example, we've received a letter from Joseph A. Gorman of the Roman Catholic Orphan Asylum Society in Brooklyn, New York. He writes:

"We are deeply interested in your experiment in Lancaster County with regard to utilizing the plentiful food items.

"We have many hundred children under care and we are of the opinion that your experiments will bring to light much of value to us in feeding these children. We are interested in so devising our purchases as to further your objective which we do believe will result in an easement on the food situation throughout our land.

"Will you be good enough to keep us advised informally as the experiments progress."

Coincident with the launching of the new program, this editorial appeared in the Lancaster Daily Intelligence Journal:

"At a nearby public sale of household goods on Saturday home cured hams, averaging 25 pounds, sold for one dollar a pound. If the bone and the speck were removed, probably only 15 pounds of good fried ham would be left, the auctioneer observed, but we in Lancaster county like speck and don't trim it too close. A 'fried-down' gallon crock of sirloin, covered with fat, sold for \$10. All of which bears out what we knew before: The pig has joined the 'cow that jumped over the moon' so far as prices are concerned."

* * * *

Jane Nickerson, writing in the New York Times magazine of Sunday, May 16, refers to the booklet, "Money-Saving Main Dishes," as "one of the year's best sellers." In an article entitled "New Program For Consumers," she writes:

"There are 32,000,000 housewives in this country; they form the nation's largest occupational group. Right now their worries are many. Their dollars--and they are our biggest spenders--no longer buy what they did even a relatively short time ago. All costs are up, but especially food. Meat prices have doubled in two years. And if supplies tighten, as they're expected to, meat will cost more before it's less.

"Pinching pennies by buying less food is the easiest solution. But it may also endanger health. Knowing this, the Government is going full steam ahead with a new consumer program, which is planned to fight the inflation that threatens diets. This program has another aim, too. It hopes to make the best use of supplies 'in order', in the Government's own words, 'to help the hungry abroad and protect democracy in Europe'...

"One of the year's best sellers (except that it's not sold, it's

free) will probably be the USDA's 'Money-Saving Main Dishes,' a booklet of 150 nutritionally sound recipes that delight both palate and purse. Issued about a month ago in the interests of the current conservation campaign, it already is in huge demand."

Miss Nickerson has another enlightening article in the New York Times of May 12. She refers to the fact that "information on plentiful foods, issued by the United States Department of Agriculture, is a boon to thrifty housewives." She points out that a shopper "armed with the list, which appears in this column the first of each month," can cut her grocery expenses considerably. This is the same list that is being used in York and Lancaster except that Miss Nickerson included an economy meat cut.

Miss Nickerson draws a comparison between "Shopper A," who studied the USDA list before she went to market, and "Shopper B" whose shopping was a hit-and-miss affair. The two market baskets with prices follow:

Shopper A: 5 lbs. old potatoes - .29; 2 lbs. cabbage - .24; 2 lbs. celery - .30; 3 lbs. Florida oranges - .24; 3 lbs. grapefruit - .30; 1 No. 2 can peas - .08; 1½ qts. grapefruit juice (46 oz.) - .15; 2 lbs. buck shad - .50; 7 lbs. shoulder roast lamb - 3.85. Total price - \$5.95.

Shopper B: 5 lbs. new potatoes - .50; 2 lbs. tomatoes - .78; 2 lbs. asparagus - .50; 1 pineapple - .35; 1 qt. strawberries - .50; 1½ qts. grape juice - .54; 1 No. 2 can creamed corn - .20; 2 lbs. whitefish - 1.60; 7 lbs. leg lamb - 4.83. Total price - \$9.80.

WASHINGTON ROUNDUP

We have been informed by War Assets Administration that millions of dollars worth of war-surplus land, buildings, and equipment--used largely for troop training during the war--have been turned over to State universities and colleges for "scientific research into better food production methods." WAA says it expects this new research property "will play a big part in alleviating the world's increasing need for more food."

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We've received the following letter from Hugh L. Glackin, of Richland, Missouri:

"Please send me your four-page booklet on grasshopper control. Last year they stripped the leaves off the alfalfa. I would like to be prepared this year.

"The Kansas City Star carried the item that every precaution should be taken against them. I agree."

(NOTE: The fact sheet, "Save Crops By Controlling Grasshoppers," can be obtained by writing to the Office of Information, Department of Agriculture, Washington 25, D. C.)

FREEDOM GARDENS

The city of Los Angeles is in the midst of a vigorous Freedom Garden program. The program is under the direction of Mayor Fletcher Bowron and his Freedom Garden Committee.

The site of Freedom Garden Number 1 near the famous Wilshire Miracle Mile is being used for demonstration purposes and for free weekly gardening lectures. A weekly gardening column prepared by Gordon Baker Lloyd, prominent California garden consultant, is released to all local community publications.

David Apter, Executive Assistant to the Mayor, writes:

"Arrangements have been made with Paramount Pictures to produce a 90-second film featuring Bob Hope. Hope will point out the objectives of the Freedom Garden program and the savings that can result from the planting of family garden plots. The film will not be localized, so that it can be used in campaigns in other areas throughout the nation. We will turn over the negative to the local National Screen Service office where prints can be ordered at a cost of approximately \$10 each. Full information will be provided your office on completion of the film. Locally, the film will be exhibited in some 200 first-and-second run and neighborhood theatres.

"The Los Angeles Junior Chamber of Commerce will 'take over' the program during July. Their promotions are expected to include a week-long garden show, distribution of free seed packets through a major oil company, and display tie-ins with local merchants.

"A picture set-up with Jack Benny is being arranged. The picture will show Benny at Freedom Garden Number 1 inquiring about how much can be saved on the family food budget by home gardening. We will send a print of this picture to the National Garden Institute so that copies can be made available to other committees for release in support of their respective campaigns."

We will keep you informed on events in Washington and the programs of local committees and organizations. We welcome your suggestions and invite you to send us news of your activities in the voluntary food and feed conservation program.